authorities for early hearing and disposal of pending cases and expeditious disposal of cases pending with Commissioner (Appeals).

(c) No, Sir.

(d) In view of reply to (c) above, does not arise.

(e) So far as direct taxes are concerned, the existing provisions are adequate to recover the outstanding demand. So far as indirect taxes are concerned, certain changes have been made in the indirect tax law, which are reproduced below:

(i) New provisions have been made in the Central Excise Act, 1944, and the Customs Act, 1962 *vide* the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Act, 2006 and for Service Tax in the Finance Act, 1994 *vide* the Finance Act, 2006. These provisions provide that during the pendency of a Show Cause Notice under the relevant Act, the departmental Officer can provisionally attach any property belonging to the person on whom a notice is served, for a period of six months with the prior approval of the Commissioner. Further, the Chief Commissioner can extend this time limit upto a maximum period of two years after recording the reasons in writing. These provisions have been incorporated for the purpose of protecting the interest of revenue till the completion of adjudication proceedings.

(ii) Provisions have also been made in the Central Excise Act, 1944, Customs Act, 1962 and the Finance Act, 1994 *vide* the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Act, 2006/Finance Act 2006 to enable publication of information relating to tax evaders and defaulters. This provision has been made with a view to strengthening the statutory provisions and facilitating effective and deterrent measures for recovery of sums due to the Government with adequate safeguards.

No further amendments are presently under consideration.

Smuggling of currency notes from Quetta, Pakistan

2143. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Quetta in Pakistan has emerged as a major center of printing and circulating Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICNs);

(b) whether it is also a fact that the FICNs are pushed into the country by the ISI through all possible channels using smugglers, underworld gangs, terrorists and general rail/air passengers; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to deal with this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) CBI has informed that as per disclosures made by one accused turned approver in a case being investigated by them, fake Indian currency notes are being printed in Quetta.

(b) As per reports, FICN is smuggled through conscious couriers, smugglers, petty traders, terrorists and insurgents, etc. through clandestine means.

(c) The government has taken a number of steps to curb smuggling of FICN into the country. These *inter-alia* include round the clock vigilance by the security forces and customs authorities manning the borders to prevent smuggling of FICN, upgradation of intelligence network, conduct of special operation along the borders, introduction of modern surveillance equipments including night vision devices, erection of fencing along the international borders etc.

Strategic sale route of disinvestment

2144. SHRI M. V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government shifted to strategic sale route of disinvestment from public offer route of disinvestment, despite the success of later method both in India, Europe, Malaysia, China and South Africa; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) There has been no case of strategic sale after the present Government assumed charge in May, 2004. The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) adopted by this Government outlines, *inter-alia*, the policy of the Government with respect to the Public Sector, including disinvestment of Government's equity in